

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Monday, March 13, 1865.

Your correspondent, "E. S.," sends the following to this bureau. It is believed to be the latest intelligence from Kingston:

GEN. COX'S HEADQUARTERS, near Kingston, Va., Friday, March 10, 1865.

Gen. Schofield's advance, under Gen. Cox, administered to-day to the Rebels under Bragg a handsome repulse. The enemy, having been reinforced by S. D. Lee's corps, attacked Gen. Cox's forces in a position near South-west Creek. They made two separate assaults. The first on General S. P. Carter's Division, occupying the extreme left. While they were being repulsed in front by Gen. Carter, Col. McQuestion's Brigade, of Rutgers' Division, the Twenty-third Corps attacked them in flank and completely routed them, capturing one hundred and twenty-seven prisoners and one piece of artillery.

Not satisfied with one attempt, they massed for a second assault, and attacked Rutgers' Division in the center. In this attempt they were as promptly repulsed with heavier loss, and retreated from the field in confusion, leaving their dead and wounded in our hands. Bragg commanded the troops in person, assisted by D. H. Hill.

[OFFICIAL.]

WASHINGTON, Monday, March 13—9:45 p. m.

Major-Gen. JOHN A. DIX:

The following dispatches have been received by this Department: E. M. STANTON, Sec'y of War. CITY POINT, Va., March 13, 1865.

To the Hon. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War:

The following has just been received:

WILKES FORD, March 10, 1865.

To Lieut.-Gen. GRANT:

The enemy made a heavy attack upon our center and left to-day, but was decisively repulsed with heavy loss. His dead and badly wounded were left upon the field. We also took several hundred prisoners. Our loss is small. Gen. Cox is only 12 miles from here to-night, and will be up early in the morning. We took prisoners from Lee's and Stewart's corps. They say two corps are here, and the rest of Johnston's army is coming.

J. M. SCHOFIELD, Major-Gen.

Newbern Dispatch.

NEWBERN, N. C., March 9—10 a. m.

Major-Gen. Schofield, Brevet Brig.-Gen. Schofield, and their Staffs, have arrived here, having left Wilmington on Monday last. They bring no news from Sherman. The enemy's papers are equally as ignorant of Sherman's whereabouts. The roads are bad, which delays his progress somewhat.

A letter was received here the other day from a young man who has been confined in Salisbury prison for the past two years, stating that he was liberated by the Union forces.

The enemy are in considerable force at Kingston, N. C., having been recently reinforced. Lee's corps from Wood's army is reported there. Yesterday the enemy captured some of our skirmishers near Kingston, belonging to the 15th Connecticut and 17th Massachusetts. Major Osborn of the 15th Connecticut is reported wounded and a prisoner. Our captures will offset the enemy's thus far. Gen. Bragg is reported to be in command of the enemy's forces at Kingston.

Major-Gen. J. D. Cox is in command of our forces at that point. He, as well as Gen. Schofield, is very popular with the troops, who are confident of success when a general move is ordered.

The weather is very warm, with an occasional shower of rain.

BY MAIL.

NEWBERN, N. C., Saturday, March 11—9 a. m.

The enemy, elated with the capture of two or three small guns and a line of skirmishers in our front, made several charges yesterday of the most reckless character, in which they were repulsed each time with heavy loss. Our forces were well entrenched, and are now within three miles of Kingston, to which point the railroad is now completed. The enemy continue to receive reinforcements, and evidently intend to make a stubborn resistance at Kingston.

Gen. Couch's division from Wilmington communicated with Major-Gen. Cox last night from Beaver Dam, a point he had just reached, which is eight miles from Gen. Cox's headquarters. Gen. Couch joins Gen. Cox's forces this morning, which indicates a battle to-day.

The enemy show signs of weakness, and will doubtless fall back to the other side of the Neuse River, and make a stand at Kingston. The enemy are reported to number from 15,000 to 20,000.

The Rebel ram is stationed at Kingston to protect the bridge across the Neuse, which is quite an expensive structure.

It is reported by deserters that Gen. Robert E. Lee and Major-Gen. Breckinridge from Richmond visited Kingston and gave instructions.

Major-Gen. Schofield remains in the field with Major-Gen. Cox, giving to every movement his personal attention.

The enemy are much alarmed and mystified in regard to Sherman's movements. We expect to hear from him in a day or two.

Major-Gen. Cox has received an order, congratulating his troops on the heroic manner in which they have

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PRICE FOUR CENTS.

met the enemy, and successfully sustained themselves thus far.

Gen. Markland, the Military Mail Agent, has arrived at Morehead City with a large mail for Sherman's army, which he is waiting to deliver by the way of Newbern.

Gen. Cox's Advance toward Kingston—The Rebels in Force Under Longstreet—The Fight on the 9th—The 15th Connecticut and 27th Massachusetts Regiments Captured—Arrival of Gen. Schofield—A Rebel Ram at Kingston.

From Our Special Correspondent.

NEWBERN, N. C., March 9, 1865.

The Union forces under Major-Gen. Cox moved out from this place on the 5th inst., taking the line of the Goldsborough and Atlantic Railroad, and at the present writing we occupy beyond Gum Swamp and within five miles of Kingston.

Scouts and reconnoitering parties agree in reporting the Rebels in considerable strength at Kingston, with reinforcements rapidly arriving under the ubiquitous Longstreet. Whether he brings a portion of Lee's army with him, or whether his force comes from another quarter is not at present definitely known, though it is supposed that he commands a force gleaned from the coast with additions from the troops in front of Sherman, which are falling back slowly, intending to make a stand in the vicinity of Goldsborough, as everything indicates that they intend holding this place, no matter what the cost may be.

A skirmish of considerable proportions took place to-day, between one of Gen. Custer's brigades and the enemy, in which the 15th Connecticut Volunteers and 27th Massachusetts were nearly all captured. The former had recently been filled up to the maximum standard, whereby we lose about 1,000 good men. The casualties were few, but no names can be reported at present. The force here is much larger than is generally supposed, and is considered fully competent to perform any task likely to be assigned to it. The roads are almost impassable and rain falling in torrents. Gen. Schofield has come up from Wilmington, and will be at the front to-day. Information has just arrived that the Rebel Ram is defending the bridge opposite Kingston, and occasionally she lets fall a shell into our lines now being advanced. The army here is full of hope and animation, and the people may be on the watch for stirring news.

## FROM WILMINGTON.

Exchange of Prisoners—General Palmer in Town—Presentation of Medals—Capture of Flags—The Mail, &c.

From Our Special Correspondent.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Feb. 27, 1865.

The severe wet weather of the past few days has rendered operations of almost every kind extremely difficult, and placed a temporary embargo on the news market.

The steamer Christopher was dispatched on Saturday (25th) up the river to bring down a portion of our prisoners for exchange, the necessary arrangements having been previously made. The whole number to be exchanged at that point, which is on the river about ten miles above this town, is about 10,000.

Over 2,000 of them arrived here to-day. As they marched through the streets they excited the sympathy of the citizens, who everywhere turned out to see them. Although cases of extreme destitution and suffering are by no means uncommon among them, they look to be in much better condition than many of the poor fellows who have returned to us of late from the infernal penitentiaries which the Rebels designate as prisons.

Gen. Palmer, commanding the Newbern District of this Department, left here on the 25th on board the steamer Escort for Beaufort direct. He was accompanied by his wife and a select party of lady friends. He was here to confer with Gen. Schofield in regard to future military movements in the Department.

Gen. Schofield's headquarters, which are located in the elegant mansion formerly occupied by P. K. Dickenson, a wealthy merchant of the town, was the scene of a pleasant affair an evening or two ago.

This was the presentation of medals to some of the officers and a few of the privates of the 104th Ohio for meritorious conduct in the field. The presentation was made by Gen. Schofield himself, accompanied by a few remarks appropriate to the occasion.

The following is the list of the recipients: Capt. J. V. Kelly, 104th Ohio Vol. Infantry; Capt. John H. Brown, 12th Ky. Vol. Infantry; Corp. N. H. Hall, Co. I, 104th Ohio; Corp. Joseph Davis, Co. G; Private Abraham Greenwald, Co. G, J. A. Grant, Co. G, J. H. Rickelicker, Co. H, 104th Ohio.

Gen. Schofield's headquarters are appropriately ornamented with flags, which add materially to the otherwise fine appearance of the building and grounds. The band of the 104th Ohio is frequently in attendance and their appearance on the street in front of the house is the signal for the inhabitants in that quarter of the town to turn out and enjoy the music.

The large number of flags, 35 in all, captured by the 23d Corps in the Franklin fight have been sent on to the Department at Washington. Two other flags captured at Town Creek in the movement of the 23d are still here, and are the objects of much curiosity. One, the flag of the 27th South Carolina Regiment, was captured by Corporal George Finch, Co. E, 100th Ohio V. I.; the other by Corporal Oliver Hughes, Co. C, 12th Kentucky.

Gen. Terry, the hero of Fort Fisher, remains at his headquarters about seven miles from the city. He still suffers from a painful abscess in his side, although somewhat better when last heard from.

The Quartermaster's Department presents a scene of unusual activity, and Gen. Dodge is winning golden opinions from all quarters.

Several stores have been opened under military authority, and the town will soon wear the cheerful air of business characteristic of it before Confederate rule had cast its blight over the place.

Major Paymaster Tucker is snugly installed in the Bank of Wilmington, and, with his assistant, Mr. Frederick Skeete, is busy preparing the rolls for the payment of the troops stationed here.

From this date, the steamer Russia will run regularly between Wilmington and Morehead City, conveying the mails, leaving Wilmington every alternate day at 3 p. m. She leaves on her first trip to-day.

E. H. H.

Exchange of Officers—Citizens Forbidden by a Rebel Officer to Feed our Returning Prisoners—Good Will of the People—Supplies Wanted for our Men—Accounts of their Captivity.

From Our Special Correspondent.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Thursday, March 2, 1865.

One thousand and one Union officers, exchanged under the recent act, arrived in this place yesterday afternoon. They all marched from the North-East Bridge, to which place they were brought from Charlotte by the cars. They passed through Golds-

borough, where the citizens, men and women, thronged around to give them food. Some of the citizens, hearing of their passing through Goldsborough, came twenty miles to bring supplies for them. Gen. Baker, commanding the post (let his memory be forever infamous), issued an order forbidding the citizens from feeding the Yankee officers—an order which the humane Union people disregarded, defying the edict of the heartless commander.

These officers uniformly bear testimony to the kindly feeling which prevailed toward them during their march through North Carolina. These demonstrations were, in some cases, even enthusiastic, and seemed to be regarded as foreshadowing the near termination of the war. Women waved their handkerchiefs to them as they passed along, and manifested the most unmistakable Union sentiments. Prominent citizens at Raleigh freely mixed with them and openly expressed their devotion to the old flag. So general and outspoken were these sentiments and feelings that the Union officers were greatly pleased and gratified, and they regard it as proof that this State will be the first to take its place by the side of her loyal sisters in the Union, and that at no distant day. I send copies of Raleigh and other papers. Your correspondent made an effort to get a complete list of names of these officers, particularly belonging to the Middle and Eastern States, but found it impossible to do so in time for this mail. I send a partial list. As they will soon go North, they will be at home, or in a situation to provide a list for publication.

The first and only outbreak of disorder which has happened there occurred last evening at a boarding-house on Front-st., where some soldiers met to procure meals. One man lost his pocket-book and being in liquor became violent. He took his stand in the door of the basement dining-room, and with an open knife in his hand declared his purpose to have his money before any one should be permitted to leave. The young man who had been assisting Mrs. Lippenicht in the house, and who seems to have been suspected, probably without cause, attempted to pass out, when he was stabbed in four places and soon after died. His name was George Simpson; the name of his regiment I have not learned.

The officers above referred to, I am happy to state, present a marked contrast in appearance from the privates who have come in. Their rations were the same as those of the men, viz., a pint of corn meal and a few spoonfuls of sorghum each, daily, but they were able, most of them, to obtain money from home upon drafts, which, though shaved at enormous discounts by the Rebels, placed in their hands the means to purchase food and other comforts, which the poor privates could not do. Some of them, however, had no money issued to them for four months. Some were barefooted, and many of them sick.

A large number, some three or four hundred, too sick and weak to continue the journey, remain three or four miles from town. Cooked rations were sent out to them.

Clothing, shoes and blankets are very much needed. For humanity's sake, let them be sent at once.

The officer stated that but for the fact that they were able to obtain money from their friends, they would not have fared any better than the privates. Their drafts or bills of exchange were handed over to persons with power of attorney, who obtained the money from the paymaster or other sources. For money thus obtained the Confederate gold speculators gave our officers two Confederate dollars for one in greenbacks, or six for one in gold. They were compelled to purchase everything from the sutlers at the most exorbitant rates. For beef of very inferior quality, they were charged from \$3 to \$5 per pound; pork \$7 per lb., lard \$12, butter from \$12 to \$20 per lb.; very small loaves of bread, about four inches square, \$1.50 per loaf; flour, \$3 per lb.; rice, \$2 per lb., and other things in proportion. The quantity of salt issued was so very small that the officers were compelled to buy part of this article of necessity also, at a dollar for a small cupful of less than half a pint.

During their residence at Columbia, over four months, they had meat issued but once, and this, with a few potatoes, was given in lieu of sorghum.

When they arrived at Columbia, on the 6th of October, their first experience was a night's rest upon the ground in an open field, without any shelter. The night was very rainy and cold. The officers had to keep moving about, or catch a few moments of rest sitting on the ground. It was in the city. On the 7th they were moved to a distance of two miles from Columbia, to a place which afterward obtained the name of "Camp Sorghum,"—so called by our officers on account of the steady flow of sorghum instead of meat or other substantial food. They were strictly guarded, but many of the officers contrived to escape.

One officer was shot dead while trying to pass the guard in the evening. Another was killed while sitting quietly by his camp-fire—Lieut. Young; the guards said it was accidental. A third was shot while passing along inside the dead-line, where he had a right to go; the guards said he was outside, but there was abundant proof that this was not the case. The health of the camp, as a general thing, was very good, and there were but few deaths from disease. They found no means of communicating with the outside world. Sometimes they could get Rebel papers, but no others—probably when things went "wrong" they would not permit them to come into the camp. Some of these officers traveled from Richmond to Mason, thence to Savannah, thence to Charleston, where they were placed under fire.

The shells from our monitors and batteries went directly over their jail-yard, but the music of the Union guns was so sweet to them it dispelled all fear, and they were overjoyed when they heard them plunk into the town. There were 600 in the jail-yard, and a large number in the Marine Hospital, and others in the work-house. No one was injured by our shells. One shell burst so near as to cut off a limb of a tree at the top of the wall. From Charleston they went to Columbia, where they remained until the advance of Sherman obliged the Rebel authorities to hurry them away to Greensborough. Here they spent but a few days, and thence were moved by railroad to Goldsborough, North Carolina. After four days they were started to come to Wilmington, the point of exchange.

They have always been transported in box cars, crowded to suffocation, in a condition of filth which would disgrace a respectable hog-pen—anything except the Southern Confederacy; and the tops of the cars would also be piled as full as they could stick on with men.

The first real exhibition of Union sentiment and feeling was noticed in North Carolina. The guard, even, expressed the earnest wish that Sherman might come and take the country. They were generally very much demoralized. The citizens, both in Raleigh and Goldsborough, wherever they could be permitted, or by stealth could do so, treated the officers well. Nothing could be purchased except tobacco—no bread or other kinds of food. There was evidently great scarcity.

The Business Men of Pittsburg in Council.

PITTSBURG, PA., Monday, March 13, 1865.

A meeting of the merchants and manufacturers of Pittsburg to-day unanimously passed resolutions requesting the Legislature of Pennsylvania to restore the full corporate rights of the Pittsburg and Connelville Railroad Company, to enable the city to obtain an additional outlet for her vast trade to the seaboard.

## THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

A Rush of Rebel Deserters—Fears for Lynchburg—Speculations as to Lee's Movements—Filling up the Army.

From Our Special Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE POTOMAC, March 8, 1865.

Last night a brisk firing arose in front of that part of our line occupied by the First Division of the Sixth Corps, and, for a time, men began to think that the enemy was bent on making an attack under cover of the dark. The firing grew more rapid, and your correspondent was about to spring out of his cot and go to the front, when the fire suddenly fell to a few scattering shots, and all was again still, leaving us to wonder what was the cause of the affair.

"A BREAK" FOR OUR LINES.

In the morning I learned that "a break" for our lines, at the point mentioned, was made by a large party of daring Rebels, who had made up their minds to quit the service in the shortest possible way; so, away they first stole, and then ran, for our lines. At one post of the picket-line they found the men asleep, and, taking their arms, they got into our lines, but not until they had a sharp fire sent after them by the pickets. This was the firing we had heard. Most of this party were men from the 22d North Carolina, and there were 27 of them. During the night no less than 128 men, from points all along their lines, found their way into ours; and this, I think, the largest number yet for one night.

LYNCHBURG.

Of this place the Rebels, who come over to us, now begin to speak. They say that a few thousand men have been sent there lately, and that their generals have some fears for it. It is known to us that Lynchburg is a great depot for the enemy in our front, that it draws supplies from it, to quit or "break out" of this State in the very quickest way they could do it. Hence, their fears for the place.

Again, the enemy—and by that word I mean Gen. Lee, for he is the ruling genius at this crisis, who might say now, *Moi c'est l'Etat*, as well as the French Louis did—may design to fall back upon Lynchburg, and break their way South from the encircling forces that are now in march toward their capital. In this way they might carry off their last great army in safety, and prolong the war in the Gulf States, with a further view of forcing the passage of the Mississippi and finding a place of refuge in Texas.

By this strategy they would, of course, relinquish all Virginia and the State by the side of it, and step by step they would, no doubt, be driven back to the Mississippi as soon as our armies should have taken up their new bases, but this agility on their part would carry the war into the year 1866. In view of this, it is to be hoped that they will stake all upon one or two great battles, and thus cut short the war.

WILLING UP THE ARMY.

This is fast being done now. Most of the trains that come up from City Point are loaded with men for the various regiments. The cars are filled to their utmost capacity, and on top of them is to be seen as many more men, all in the light blue overcoat, which gives to a train, seen at a distance as it whirrs along, a covering of a light blue mass.

COMING TO THE FRONT.

It is a source of little excitement to the "boys" fresh from the cities and country, and they all seem to feel full of ardor and fun, though a few thoughtful fellows may be seen in the throng, but these are of men who have left their families behind them, and cannot feel light under the thought that they may never see those dear to them again.

From Our Special Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE POTOMAC, March 10, 1865.

DIES NOW.

If we have a "Dies Now" in civil life, so may we have a like day in war and the 9th instant was such a day with us. All was still. This gave us time to look at other matters, and I find one to write a few lines about. It is

OUR ORGANIZATION.

It is well known that this and our drill have been taken from the French, and if there are faults in their system, so there are in ours; but I must say that there are fewer faults in the French battalion organization than in ours. They now put eight companies only in the battalion, and only two field officers in command of it, with other points which it would take too much space here to notice. My object is only to point out the way in which we could amend our organization a little.

1. The number of companies in a battalion ought not to be more than 8 for line and 6 for rifle.
2. The strength of a company should be 100 rank and file, 4 sergeants and 2 buglers, in all 106 men, with 3 officers.
3. Each company should be divided into two sections, and when strong, into four sub-sections.
4. Each company ought to have a standing number.
5. Two companies ought in drill to be termed B. company, and be lettered, as A, B, Company B, C, and D, if there be a fourth.
6. The battalion might be placed under the command of two field officers only, the first to be a lieutenant-colonel and the second a major.
7. There should always be two field officers, or acting field officers, with the battalion.
8. The same rule should apply to the number of officers, or acting officers, with the company.

REASONS FOR THESE CHANGES.

1. A battalion of a few strong companies can mass and deploy with more celerity than one of a greater strength. Again, in line, it is not too extensive for commands, to be heard in the dimmest action; and again, in column, it offers less depth to a fire of artillery than the battalion of greater strength.
2. A company dwindles away so soon in war, that it ought to be at least 100 men strong, and generally four sergeants are enough for all cases.
3. A section is the best term for the half company; "platoon" is a corruption of the French word *peloton*, which means a company, and not its half.
4. It is inadmissible to letter companies as well as number them.
5. The term *Brigade* is certainly better than "division," which ought not to be applied to more than one part of an army.
6. If two field officers are enough for a battalion (and the French service shows that they are), there need not be three.
7. A second field officer ought always to be present to take the place of the first, in case of casualty, and to assist him in handling the battalion.
8. The same may be said of the presence of two officers with a company.

These last two rules I suggest because they are not always observed.

In regard to the rifle battalion, the reason that it is advisable to have only six companies in it is, that greater celerity is required of it than of a line battalion; and because it ought not to extend over too much ground when totally thrown out in a skirmish line.

In the Bersaglieri battalions of the Sardinian army there are only six companies; and these battalions are now regarded as the first of that arm in the world. In the Tyrolean rifle battalions there are only four companies, but these have 150 men each; so that the battalion has 600 and odd men, as that of six companies of 100 men each would have. I think it is enough to men,

tion these two precedents in order to show that the strength of a rifle battalion ought not to exceed 600 men, organized into six companies.

Our army corps organization is good enough; and so is our division. As to the brigade, it ought not to have more than four battalions in it.

The best thing that can be done in the case of this army is to consolidate battalions into eight companies, and brigades into four battalions, allowing as many officers to resign as the reduction would leave no commands for; and this I would suggest to the Hon. Secretary of War.

SANITARY.

The health of this army is very good, thanks to the long rest it has had, and the abundance of fresh rations served out to the men. There are very few men on the sick list for such a force, though the total makes a large enough figure. The rains that deluge the ground every other day cannot fail to cause some sickness, for the men have to expose themselves on picket duty, etc. It is pleasing, however, to note the general look of the men.

NO MAIL.

came to hand last evening, owing, I am told, to delay at Havre de Grace, caused by ice in the river. Our latest date from New-York is the 6th.

"FAIR VISITORS."

A number of the fair sex who take an interest in our matters left the capital on the 5th, by special boat with Gen. Ingalls, stayed over night at City Point, and came up here yesterday on a visit. They were met by the most gallant of the staffs, who "showed them round," and all that sort of thing, and stayed here over night. To-day they go back to civilization, I hear.

## THE ARMY OF THE JAMES.

Continuance of Bad Weather—High Water in the James—The Rebel Rans Expected—Preparations for an Early Advance—Hunters of Sherman and Sheridan—Maj. Gen. Ord.

From Our Special Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE JAMES, March 8, 1865.

The "Richmond and Petersburg lines" are still overshadowed by a dense cloud of mist which gives no promise of fair weather for some time to come. As a consequence of the continuance of rainy weather the James is still swift and swollen, although it is lower than on yesterday.

ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR THE REBEL RAMS.

The present high water in the river induces many to believe that another visit will be undertaken by the enemy's iron-clads, and more than usual vigilance is exercised by our fleet in view of the possibility of such a contingency. The second coming of the enemy's unwieldy and ill-armed iron-clads would be hailed with unfeigned delight by every jolly tar on duty in the upper James, and they would inaugurate a conflict with their antagonists with the fullest confidence as to its issue. That the rams will again attempt another raid below Duck Gap is probable, but, blocked at Richmond as they are at present, they are powerless to harm us, but our incursions upon the existing "Confederacy" it would be unreasonable to suppose for a moment that we have neglected any preparation for their reception.

THE NOTE OF PREPARATIONS.

While Sherman with his army is "among the pines" of North Carolina, and Sheridan at the head of a formidable column of dashing troopers, supposed to be maneuvering in the vicinity of Lynchburg, the long staid line of Grant's army begins to exhibit unwelcome animation and puts on a threatening and belligerent aspect, as if only waiting for the "forward," which is to enable them to fulfill an important part in the closing scene of the great Rebellion drama. Reviews, always as indicative of the speedy approach of the campaign as the clouds which precede the storm, have already been initiated in the armies above and below the James, and other assurances are not wanting that active operations will commence as soon as the skies give promise of fair weather.

SHERMAN.

It is but truth to say that some apprehension is felt in regard to Sherman, of whose movements the Rebel papers spitefully persist in saying nothing. It is evident from the tone of the Richmond papers that he has, as yet, had no general engagement with Johnston's forces, but the confidence, real or assumed, of the Rebels and the absence of any tangible indications of Lee's intention to abandon either Richmond or Petersburg, adds, it must be confessed, to the universal anxiety to learn of Sherman's whereabouts and prospects. It is likewise plain that the enemy bases his future tenure those two points upon his ability to prevent a junction of the armies of Grant and Sherman, an event which would precede the evacuation of these cities by only a few hours.

DEPARTURE STORIES.

Quite a number of Rebel deserters concur in the statement that torpedoes have been planted around Petersburg and Richmond, and that tunnels and mines have been dug along their lines for the reception of powder wherewith to stonize our advancing columns in case Lee is compelled to abandon those two strongholds. The story is not an improbable one, and may or may not be true.

THE DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA.

The Lieutenant-General could probably have not made a more fitting selection for the responsible duties of the position than Major-Gen. E. O. C. Ord, commanding "the Department of Virginia and the Army of the James." The discrimination, intelligence and assiduity displayed by Gen. Ord, mark him as possessing all the requisites necessary to the proper discharge of the onerous duties of his office. Whether galloping to the front on a tour of observation along the line, or in his office busily engaged in the transaction of official business, Gen. Ord is always the same hard-working officer and the same courteous gentleman. He spares no pains to become thoroughly conversant with the necessities of his troops, and omits no measure to promote their personal comfort and soldierly efficiency. As commander of the Department of Virginia he is intrusted with the regulation of "Negro Affairs" in the districts of the Eastern Shore, Fortress Monroe, and Norfolk.

The new free labor system created in those districts by the President's Emancipation Proclamation, and the consequent temporary confusion which ensued from so great a social revolution, rendered the appointment of military superintendents in those districts not only advisable but imperative. They were accordingly appointed by Gen. Butler, their province being to inaugurate and superintend a free-labor system: calculated to satisfy the whites, while insuring a reasonable compensation to the negro, to encourage industry and to prevent feuds between the freedmen and their employers. Reports of these superintendents will soon be made public, showing the propriety and necessity of the measures adopted, and exhibiting the superiority of the present over the former slave-labor regime.